

VERSES

By

H. BELLOC

DE GUSTIBUS · NON · EST · DISPUTANDUM ·



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VERSES BY H. BELLOC

V E R S E S

BY

H. BELLOC

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LONDON

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To

JOHN SWINNERTON PHILLIMORE

A DEDICATION

WITH THIS BOOK OF VERSE

*When you and I were little tiny boys
We took a most impertinent delight
In foolish, painted and misshapen toys
That hidden mothers brought to us at night.*

*Do you that have the child's diviner part—
The dear content a love familiar brings—
Take these imperfect toys, till in your heart
They too attain the form of perfect things.*

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ERRATA

Page 34, line 3, *for* When as *read* Whenas.

„ 37 „ 1, *for* you *read* your.

„ 43 „ 3, *for* heard *read* saw.

„ 77 „ 5, *for* as it is *read* as is.

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TO DIVES

DIVES, when you and I go down to Hell,
Where scribblers end and millionaires as well,
We shall be carrying on our separate backs
Two very large but very different packs ;
And as you stagger under yours, my friend,
Down the dull shore where all our journeys end,
And go before me (as your rank demands)
Towards the infinite flat underlands,
And that dear river of forgetfulness—
Charon, a man of exquisite address
(For, as your wife's progenitors could tell,
They're very strict on etiquette in Hell),
Will, since you are a lord, observe, " My lord,
We cannot take these weighty things aboard ! "
Then down they go, my wretched Dives, down—
The fifteen sorts of boots you kept for town,
The hat to meet the Devil in ; the plain
But costly ties ; the cases of champagne ;
The solid watch, and seal, and chain, and charm ;
The working model of a Burning Farm
(To give the little Belials) ; all the three
Biscuits for Cerberus ; the guarantee
From Lambeth that the Rich can never burn,

TO DIVES

And even promising a safe return ;
The admirable overcoat, designed
To cross Cocytus—very warmly lined :
Sweet Dives, you will leave them all behind
And enter Hell as tattered and as bare
As was your father when he took the air
Behind a barrow-load in Leicester Square.
Then turned to me, and noting one that brings
With careless step a mist of shadowy things :
Laughter and memories, and a few regrets,
Some honour, and a quantity of debts,
A doubt or two of sorts, a trust in God,
And (what will seem to you extremely odd)
His father's granfer's father's father's name,
Unspoilt, untitled, even spelt the same ;
Charon, who twenty thousand times before
Has ferried Poets to the ulterior shore,
Will estimate the weight I bear, and cry—
“ Comrade ! ” (He has himself been known
to try
His hand at Latin and Italian verse,
Much in the style of Virgil—only worse)
“ We let such vain imaginaries pass ! ”
Then tell me, Dives, which will look the ass—
You, or myself ? Or Charon ? Who can tell ?
They order things so damnably in Hell.

STANZAS WRITTEN ON BATTERSEA BRIDGE
DURING A SOUTH-WESTERLY GALE

THE woods and downs have caught the mid-December,
The noisy woods and high sea-downs of home ;
The wind has found me and I do remember
The strong scent of the foam.

Woods, darlings of my wandering feet, another
Possesses you, another treads the Down ;
The South West Wind that was my elder brother
Has come to me in town.

The wind is shouting from the hills of morning,
I do remember and I will not stay.
I'll take the Hampton road without a warning
And get me clean away.

The Channel is up, the little seas are leaping,
The tide is making over Arun Bar ;
And there's my boat, where all the rest are sleeping
And my companions are.

I'll board her, and apparel her, and I'll mount her,
My boat, that was the strongest friend to me—

ON BATTERSEA BRIDGE

That brought my boyhood to its first encounter
And taught me the wide sea.

Now shall I drive her, roaring hard a' weather,
Right for the salt and leave them all behind.
We'll quite forget the treacherous streets together
And find—or shall we find ?

There is no Pilotry my soul relies on
Whereby to catch beneath my bended hand,
Faint and beloved along the extreme horizon
That unforgotten land.

We shall not round the granite piers and paven
To lie to wharves we know with canvas furled.
My little Boat, we shall not make the haven—
It is not of the world.

Somewhere of English forelands grandly guarded
It stands, but not for exiles, marked and clean ;
Oh ! not for us. A mist has risen and marred it :—
My youth lies in between.

So in this snare that holds me and appals me,
Where honour hardly lives nor loves remain,
The Sea compels me and my County calls me,
But stronger things restrain.

.

ON BATTERSEA BRIDGE

England, to me that never have malingered,
Nor spoken falsely, nor your flattery used,
Nor even in my rightful garden lingered :—
What have you not refused ?

THE SOUTH COUNTRY

WHEN I am living in the Midlands
That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening :
My work is left behind ;
And the great hills of the South Country
Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country
They stand along the sea ;
And it's there walking in the high woods
That I could wish to be,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Walking along with me.

The men that live in North England
I saw them for a day :
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,
Their skies are fast and grey ;
From their castle-walls a man may see
The mountains far away.

The men that live in West England
They see the Severn strong,

THE SOUTH COUNTRY

A-rolling on rough water brown
Light aspen leaves along.
They have the secret of the Rocks,
And the oldest kind of song.

But the men that live in the South Country
Are the kindest and most wise,
They get their laughter from the loud surf,
And the faith in their happy eyes
Comes surely from our Sister the Spring
When over the sea she flies ;
The violets suddenly bloom at her feet,
She blesses us with surprise.

I never get between the pines
But I smell the Sussex air ;
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there.
And along the sky the line of the Downs
So noble and so bare.

A lost thing could I never find,
Nor a broken thing mend :
And I fear I shall be all alone
When I get towards the end.
Who will there be to comfort me
Or who will be my friend ?

I will gather and carefully make my friends
Of the men of the Sussex Weald,

THE SOUTH COUNTRY

They watch the stars from silent folds,
They stiffly plough the field.
By them and the God of the South Country
My poor soul shall be healed.

If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me.

THE FANATIC

LAST night in Compton Street, Soho,
A man whom many of you know
Gave up the ghost at half past nine.
That evening he had been to dine
At Gressington's—an act unwise,
But not the cause of his demise.
The doctors all agree that he
Was touched with cardiac atrophy
Accelerated (more or less)
By lack of proper food, distress,
Uncleanliness, and loss of sleep.

He was a man that could not keep
His money (when he had the same)
Because of creditors who came
And took it from him ; and he gave
So freely that he could not save.

But all the while a sort of whim
Persistently remained with him,
Half admirable, half absurd :
To keep his word, to keep his word. . . .
By which he did not mean what you
And I would mean (of payments due
Or punctual rental of the Flat—

THE FANATIC

He was a deal too mad for that)
But—as he put it with a fine
Abandon, foolish or divine—
But “ That great word which every man
Gave God before his life began.”
It was a sacred word, he said,
Which comforted the pathless dead .
And made God smile when it was shown
Unforfeited, before the Throne.
And this (he said) he meant to hold
In spite of debt, and hate, and cold ;
And this (he said) he meant to show
As passport to the wards below.
He boasted of it and gave praise
To his own self through all his days.

He wrote a record to preserve
How steadfastly he did not swerve
From keeping it ; how stiff he stood
Its guardian, and maintained it good.
He had two witnesses to swear
He kept it once in Berkeley Square.
(Where hardly anything survives)
And, through the loneliest of lives
He kept it clean, he kept it still,
Down to the last extremes of ill.

So when he died, of many friends
Who came in crowds from all the ends
Of London, that it might be known
They knew the man who died alone,

THE FANATIC

Some, who had thought his mood sublime
And sent him soup from time to time,
Said, " Well, you cannot make them fit
The world, and there's an end of it ! "
But others, wondering at him, said :
" The man that kept his word is dead ! "

Then angrily, a certain third
Cried, " Gentlemen, he kept his word.
And as a man whom beasts surround
Tumultuous, on a little mound
Stands Archer, for one dreadful hour,
Because a Man is born to Power—
And still, to daunt the pack below,
Twangs the clear purpose of his bow,
Till overwhelmed he dares to fall :
So stood this bulwark of us all.
He kept his word as none but he
Could keep it, and as did not we.
And round him as he kept his word
To-day's diseased and faithless herd,
A moment loud, a moment strong,
But foul forever, rolled along."

NOËL

I

ON a winter's night long time ago
 (*The bells ring loud and the bells ring low*),
When high howled wind, and down fell snow
 (*Carillon, Carilla*).
Saint Joseph he and Nostre Dame,
Riding on an ass, full weary came
From Nazareth into Bethlehem.
 And the small child Jesus smile on you.

II

And Bethlehem inn they stood before
 (*The bells ring less and the bells ring more*),
The landlord bade them begone from his door
 (*Carillon, Carilla*).
“Poor folk” (says he), “must lie where they may,
For the Duke of Jewry comes this way,
With all his train on a Christmas Day.”
 And the small child Jesus smile on you.

NOËL

III

Poor folk that may my carol hear
 (*The bells ring single and the bells ring clear*),
See ! God's one child had hardest cheer !
 (Carillon, Carilla).
Men grown hard on a Christmas morn ;
The dumb beast by and a babe forlorn.
It was very, very cold when our Lord was born.
 And the small child Jesus smile on you.

IV

Now these were Jews as Jews must be
 (*The bells ring merry and the bells ring free*).
But Christian men in a band are we
 (Carillon, Carilla).
Empty we go, and ill be-dight,
Singing Noël on a Winter's night.
Give us to sup by the warm firelight,
 And the small child Jesus smile on you.

THE EARLY MORNING

THE moon on the one hand, the dawn on the other :
The moon is my sister, the dawn is my brother.
The moon on my left and the dawn on my right.
My brother, good morning : my sister, good night.

THE BIRDS

WHEN Jesus Christ was four years old,
The angels brought Him toys of gold,
Which no man ever had bought or sold.

And yet with these He would not play.
He made Him small fowl out of clay,
And blessed them till they flew away :

Tu creasti Domine.

Jesus Christ, Thou child so wise,
Bless mine hands and fill mine eyes,
And bring my soul to Paradise.

OUR LORD AND OUR LADY

THEY warned Our Lady for the Child
That was Our blessed Lord,
And She took Him into the desert wild,
Over the camel's ford.

And a long song She sang to Him
And a short story told :
And She wrapped Him in a woollen cloak
To keep Him from the cold.

But when Our Lord was grown a man
The Rich they dragged Him down,
And they crucified Him in Golgotha,
Out and beyond the Town.

They crucified Him on Calvary,
Upon an April day ;
And because He had been her little Son
She followed Him all the way.

Our Lady stood beside the Cross,
A little space apart,
And when She heard Our Lord cry out
A sword went through Her Heart.

OUR LORD AND OUR LADY

They laid Our Lord in a marble tomb,
Dead, in a winding sheet.
But Our Lady stands above the world
With the white Moon at Her feet.

IN A BOAT

LADY ! Lady !
Upon Heaven-height,
Above the harsh morning
In the mere light.

Above the spindrift
And above the snow,
Where no seas tumble,
And no winds blow.

The twisting tides,
And the perilous sands
Upon all sides
Are in your holy hands.

The wind harries
And the cold kills ;
But I see your chapel
Over far hills.

My body is frozen,
My soul is afraid :
Stretch out your hands to me,
Mother and maid.

IN A BOAT

Mother of Christ,
And Mother of me,
Save me alive
From the howl of the sea.

If you will Mother me
Till I grow old,
I will hang in your chapel
A ship of pure gold.

COURTESY

OF Courtesy, it is much less
Than Courage of Heart or Holiness,
Yet in my Walks it seems to me
That the Grace of God is in Courtesy.

On Monks I did in Storrington fall,
They took me straight into their Hall ;
I saw Three Pictures on a wall,
And Courtesy was in them all.

The first the Annunciation ;
The second the Visitation ;
The third the Consolation,
Of God that was Our Lady's Son.

The first was of Saint Gabriel ;
On Wings a-flame from Heaven he fell ;
And as he went upon one knee
He shone with Heavenly Courtesy.

Our Lady out of Nazareth rode—
It was Her month of heavy load ;
Yet was Her face both great and kind,
For Courtesy was in Her Mind.

COURTESY

The third it was our Little Lord,
Whom all the Kings in arms adored ;
He was so small you could not see
His large intent of Courtesy.

Our Lord, that was Our Lady's Son,
Go bless you, People, one by one ;
My Rhyme is written, my work is done.

THE NIGHT

Most holy Night, that still dost keep
The keys of all the doors of sleep,
To me when my tired eyelids close
Give thou repose.

And let the far lament of them
That chaunt the dead day's requiem
Make in my ears, who wakeful lie,
Soft lullaby.

Let them that guard the horned moon
By my bedside their memories croon.
So shall I have new dreams and blest
In my brief rest.

Fold your great wings about my face,
Hide dawning from my resting-place,
And cheat me with your false delight,
Most Holy Night.

THE LEADER

THE sword fell down : I heard a knell ;
I thought that ease was best,
And sullen men that buy and sell
Were host : and I was guest.
All unashamed I sat with swine,
We shook the dice for war,
The night was drunk with an evil wine—
But she went on before.

*She rode a steed of the sea-foam breed,
All faery was her blade,
And the armour on her tender limbs
Was of the moonshine made.*

By God that sends the master-maids,
I know not whence she came,
But the sword she bore to save the soul
Went up like an altar flame
Where a broken race in a desert place
Call on the Holy Name.

*We strained our eyes in the dim day-rise,
We could not see them plain ;*

THE LEADER

*But two dead men from Valmy fen
Rode at her bridle-rein.*

I hear them all, my fathers call,
I see them how they ride,
And where had been the rout obscene
Was an army straight with pride.
A hundred thousand marching men,
Of squadrons twenty score,
And after them all the guns, the guns,
But she went on before.

*Her face was like a king's command
When all the swords are drawn.
She stretched her arms and smiled at us,
Her head was higher than the hills.
She led us to the endless plains.
We lost her in the dawn.*

A BIVOUAC

I

You came without a human sound,
 You came and brought my soul to me ;
I only woke, and all around
They slumbered on the firelit ground,
 Beside the guns in Burgundy.

II

I felt the gesture of your hands,
 You signed my forehead with the Cross ;
The gesture of your holy hands
Was bounteous—like the misty lands
 Along the Hills in Calvados.

III

But when I slept I saw your eyes,
 Hungry as death, and very far.
I saw demand in your dim eyes
Mysterious as the moons that rise
 At midnight, in the Pines of Var.

TO THE BALLIOL MEN STILL IN AFRICA

YEARS ago when I was at Balliol,
Balliol men—and I was one—
Swam together in winter rivers,
Wrestled together under the sun.
And still in the heart of us, Balliol, Balliol,
Loved already, but hardly known,
Welded us each of us into the others :
Called a levy and chose her own.

Here is a House that armours a man
With the eyes of a boy and the heart of a ranger,
And a laughing way in the teeth of the world
And a holy hunger and thirst for danger :
Balliol made me, Balliol fed me,
Whatever I had she gave me again :
And the best of Balliol loved and led me.
God be with you, Balliol men.

I have said it before, and I say it again,
There was treason done, and a false word spoken,
And England under the dregs of men,
And bribes about, and a treaty broken :

TO THE BALLIOL MEN STILL IN AFRICA

But angry, lonely, hating it still,
I wished to be there in spite of the wrong.
My heart was heavy for Cumnor Hill
And the hammer of galloping all day long.

Galloping outward into the weather,
Hands a-ready and battle in all :
Words together and wine together
And song together in Balliol Hall.
Rare and single ! Noble and few ! . . .
Oh ! they have wasted you over the sea !
The only brothers ever I knew,
The men that laughed and quarrelled with me.

.

Balliol made me, Balliol fed me,
Whatever I had she gave me again ;
And the best of Balliol loved and led me,
God be with you, Balliol men.

VERSES TO A LORD WHO, IN THE HOUSE
OF LORDS, SAID THAT THOSE WHO
OPPOSED THE SOUTH AFRICAN AD-
VENTURE CONFUSED SOLDIERS WITH
MONEY-GRUBBERS

You thought because we held, my lord,
 An ancient cause and strong,
That therefore we maligned the sword :
 My lord, you did us wrong.

We also know the sacred height
 Up on Tugela side,
Where those three hundred fought with Beit
 And fair young Wernher died.

The daybreak on the failing force,
 The final sabres drawn :
Tall Goltman, silent on his horse,
 Superb against the dawn.

The little mound where Eckstein stood
 And gallant Albu fell,
And Oppenheim, half blind with blood
Went fording through the rising flood—
 My Lord, we know them well.

VERSES TO A LORD

The little empty homes forlorn,
The ruined synagogues that mourn,
 In Frankfort and Berlin ;
We knew them when the peace was torn—
We of a nobler lineage born—
And now by all the gods of scorn
 We mean to rub them in.

THE REBEL

THERE is a wall of which the stones
Are lies and bribes and dead men's bones.
And wrongfully this evil wall
Denies what all men made for all,
And shamelessly this wall surrounds
Our homesteads and our native grounds.

But I will gather and I will ride,
And I will summon a countryside,
And many a man shall hear my halloa
Who never had thought the horn to follow ;
And many a man shall ride with me
Who never had thought on earth to see
High justice in her armoury.

When we find them where they stand,
A mile of men on either hand,
I mean to charge from right away
And force the flanks of their array,
And press them inward from the plains,
And drive them clamouring down the lanes,

THE REBEL

And gallop and harry and have them down,
And carry the gates and hold the town.
Then shall I rest me from my ride
With my great anger satisfied.

Only, before I eat and drink,
When I have killed them all, I think
That I will batter their carven names,
And slit the pictures in their frames,
And burn for scent their cedar door,
And melt the gold their women wore,
And hack their horses at the knees,
And hew to death their timber trees,
And plough their gardens deep and through—
And all these things I mean to do
For fear perhaps my little son
Should break his hands, as I have done.

THE PROPHET LOST IN THE HILLS AT EVENING

STRONG God which made the topmost stars
To circulate and keep their course,
Remember me ; whom all the bars
Of sense and dreadful fate enforce.

Above me in your heights and tall,
Impassable the summits freeze,
Below the haunted waters call
Impassable beyond the trees.

I hunger and I have no bread.
My gourd is empty of the wine.
Surely the footsteps of the dead
Are shuffling softly close to mine !

It darkens. I have lost the ford.
There is a change on all things made.
The rocks have evil faces, Lord,
And I am awfully afraid.

Remember me ! the Voids of Hell
Expand enormous all around.

THE PROPHET LOST IN THE HILLS

Strong friend of souls, Emmanuel,
Redeem me from accursed ground.

The long descent of wasted days,
To these at last have led me down ;
Remember that I filled with praise
The meaningless and doubtful ways
That lead to an eternal town.

I challenged and I kept the Faith,
The bleeding path alone I trod ;
It darkens. Stand about my wraith,
And harbour me—almighty God !

SONG

INVITING THE INFLUENCE OF A YOUNG LADY UPON THE OPENING YEAR

I

You wear the morning like your dress
And are with mastery crowned ;
When as you walk your loveliness
Goes shining all around.
Upon your secret, smiling way
Such new contents were found,
The Dancing Loves made holiday
On that delightful ground.

II

Then summon April forth, and send
Commandment through the flowers ;
About our woods your grace extend
A queen of careless hours.
For oh, not Vera veiled in rain,
Nor Dian's sacred Ring,
With all her royal nymphs in train
Could so lead on the Spring.

THE RING

WHEN I was flying before the King
In the wood of Valognes in my hiding,
Although I had not anything
I sent a woman a golden ring.

A Ring of the Moors beyond Leon
With emerald and with diamond stone,
And a writing no man ever had known,
And an opal standing all alone.

The shape of the ring the heart to bind :
The emerald turns from cold to kind :
The writing makes her sure to find :—
But the evil opal changed her mind.

Now when the King was dead, was he,
I came back hurriedly over the sea
From the long rocks in Normandy
To Bosham that is by Selsey.
And we clipt each other knee to knee.
But what I had was lost to me.

CUCKOO !

IN woods so long time bare.

Cuckoo !

Up and in the wood, I know not where
Two notes fall.

Yet I do not envy him at all
His phantasy.

Cuckoo !

I too,

Somewhere,

I have sung as merrily as he

Who can dare,

Small and careless lover, so to laugh at care,

And who

Can call

Cuckoo !

In woods of winter weary,

In scented woods, of winter weary, call

Cuckoo !

In woods so long time bare.

THE MIRROR

THE mirror held you Fair, my Fair,
A fickle moment's space ;
You looked into mine eyes and there
For ever fixed your face.

Keep rather to your Looking Glass
Than my more faithful eyes.
It told the truth. Alas ! my lass !
My constant memory lies.

THE LITTLE SERVING MAID

I

THERE was a Queen of England,
And a good Queen too.
She had a house in Powis Land
With the Severn running through ;
And Men-folk and Women-folk
Apprenticed to a trade ;
But the prettiest of all
Was a Little Serving Maid.

II

“ Oh Madam, Queen of England !
Oh will you let me go !
For there's a Lad in London
And he would have it so.
And I would have it too, Madam,
And with him would I bide ;
And he will be the Groom, Madam,
And I shall be the bride ! ”

THE LITTLE SERVING MAID

III

“ Oh fie to you and shame to you,
 You Little Serving Maid !
And are you not astonied ?
 And are you not afraid ?
For never was it known
 Since Yngelonde began
That a Little Serving Maid
 Should go a-meeting of a man !

IV

Then the Little Serving Maid
 She went and laid her down,
With her cross and her bede,
 In her new courting gown.
And she called in Mother Mary's name
 And heavily she sighed :
“ I think that I have come to shame ! ”
 And after that she died.

V

The good Queen of England
 Her women came and ran :
“ The Little Serving Maid is dead
 From loving of a man ! ”

THE LITTLE SERVING MAID

Said the good Queen of England

“ That is ill news to hear !

Take her out and shroud her,

And lay her on a bier.”

VI

They laid her on a bier,

In the court-yard all ;

Some came from Foresting,

And some came from Hall.

And Great Lords carried her,

And proud Priests prayed.

And that was the end

Of the Little Serving Maid.

THE END OF THE ROAD

IN THESE BOOTS AND WITH THIS STAFF
Two hundred leaguers and a half
Walked I, went I, paced I, tripped I,
Marched I, held I, skelped I, slipped I,
Pushed I, panted, swung and dashed I ;
Picked I, forded, swam and splashed I,
Strolled I, climbed I, crawled and scrambled,
Dropped and dipped I, ranged and rambled ;
Plodded I, hobbled I, trudged and tramped I,
And in lonely spinnies camped I,
And in haunted pinewoods slept I,
Lingered, loitered, limped and crept I,
Clambered, halted, stepped and leapt I ;
Slowly sauntered, roundly strode I,
And . . . (Oh ! Patron saints and Angels
That protect the four Evangels !
And you Prophets vel majores
Vel incerti, vel minores,
Virgines ac confessores
Chief of whose peculiar glories
Est in Aula Regis stare
Atque orare et exorare
Et clamare et conclamare

THE END OF THE ROAD

Clamantes cum clamoribus.

Pro Nobis Peccatoribus.)

Let me not conceal it. . . . *Rode I.*

(For who but critics could complain

Of "riding" in a railway train?)

Across the valley and the high-land,

With all the world on either hand,

Drinking when I had a mind to,

Singing when I felt inclined to ;

Nor ever turned my face to home

Till I had slaked my heart at Rome.

AUVERGNAT

THERE was a man was half a clown
 (It's so my father tells of it).
He heard the church in Clermont town
And laughed to hear the bells of it.

He laughed to hear the bells that ring
In Clermont Church and round of it ;
He heard the verger's daughter sing,
And loved her for the sound of it.

The verger's daughter said him nay ;
She had the right of choice in it.
He left the town at break of day :
He hadn't had a voice in it.

The road went up, the road went down,
And there the matter ended it.
He broke his heart in Clermont town,
At Pontgibaud they mended it.

DRINKING SONG

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF BURGUNDY WINE

My jolly fat host with your face all a-grin,
Come, open the door to us, let us come in.
A score of stout fellows who think it no sin
If they toast till they're hoarse, and they drink till
they spin,
Hoofed it amain,
Rain or no rain,
To crack your old jokes, and your bottles to
drain.

Such a warmth in the belly that nectar begets
As soon as his guts with its humour he wets,
The miser his gold, and the student his debts,
And the beggar his rags and his hunger forgets.
For there's never a wine
Like this tipple of thine
From the great hill of Nuits to the River of
Rhine.

Outside you may hear the great gusts as they go
By Foy, by Duerne, and the hills of Lerraulx,

DRINKING SONG

But the rain he may rain, and the wind he may blow,
If the Devil's above there's good liquor below.

So it abound,

Pass it around,

Burgundy's Burgundy all the year round.

DRINKING DIRGE

A THOUSAND years ago I used to dine
In houses where they gave me such regale
Of dear companionship and comrades fine
That out I went alone beyond the pale ;
And riding, laughed and dared the skies malign
To show me all the undiscovered tale—
But my philosophy's no more divine,
I put my pleasure in a pint of ale.

And you, my friends, oh ! pleasant friends of mine,
Who leave me now alone, without avail,
On Californian hills you gave me wine,
You gave me cider-drink in Longuevaille ;
If after many years you come to pine
For comradeship that is an ancient tale—
You'll find me drinking beer in Dead Man's Chine.
I put my pleasure in a pint of ale.

In many a briny boat I've tried the brine,
From many a hidden harbour I've set sail,
Steering towards the sunset where there shine
The distant amethystine islands pale.

DRINKING DIRGE

There are no ports beyond the far sea-line,
Nor any halloa to meet the mariner's hail ;
I stand at home and slip the anchor-line.
I put my pleasure in a pint of ale.

ENVOI

Prince ! Is it true when you go out to dine
You bring your bottle in a freezing pail ?
Why then you cannot be a friend of mine.
I put my pleasure in a pint of ale.

WEST SUSSEX DRINKING SONG

THEY sell good Beer at Haslemere
And under Guildford Hill.
At Little Cowfold as I've been told
A beggar may drink his fill :
There is a good brew in Amberley too,
And by the bridge also ;
But the swipes they take in at Washington Inn
Is the very best Beer I know.

Chorus.

With my here it goes, there it goes,
All the fun's before us :
The Tipple's Aboard and the night is young,
The door's ajar and the Barrel is sprung,
I am singing the best song ever was sung
And it has a rousing chorus.

If I were what I never can be,
The master or the squire :
If you gave me the hundred from here to the sea,
Which is more than I desire :

WEST SUSSEX DRINKING SONG

Then all my crops should be barley and hops,
And did my harvest fail
I'd sell every rood of mine acres I would
For a belly-full of good Ale.

Chorus.

With my here it goes, there it goes,
All the fun's before us :
The Tipple's aboard and the night is young,
The door's ajar and the Barrel is sprung,
I am singing the best song ever was sung
And it has a rousing Chorus.

A BALLAD ON SOCIOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

A WHILE ago it came to pass
 (Merry we carol it all the day),
There sat a man on the top of an ass
 (Heart be happy and carol be gay
 In spite of the price of hay).

And over the down they hoofed it so
 (Happy go lucky has best of fare),
The man up above and the brute below
 (And singing we all forget to care
 A man may laugh if he dare).

Over the stubble and round the crop
 (Life is short and the world is round),
The donkey beneath and the man on top
 (Oh ! let good ale be found, be found,
 Merry good ale and sound).

It happened again as it happened before
 (Tobacco's a boon but ale is bliss),
The moke in the ditch and the man on the floor
 (And that is the moral to this, to this
 Remarkable artifice).

AN ORACLE

THAT WARNED THE WRITER WHEN ON PILGRIMAGE

MATUTINUS adest ubi Vesper, et accipiens te
Saepe recusatum voces intelligit hospes
Rusticus ignotas notas, ac flumina tellus
Occupat—In sancto tum, tum, stans Aede caveto
Tonsuram Hirsuti Capitis, via namque pedestrem
Ferrea praeveniens cursum, peregrine, laborem
Pro pietate tua inceptum frustratur, amore
Antiqui Ritus alto sub Numine Romae.

Translation of the above :—

When early morning seems but eve
And they that still refuse receive :
When speech unknown men understand ;
And floods are crossed upon dry land.
Within the Sacred Walls beware
The Shaven Head that boasts of Hair,
For when the road attains the rail
The Pilgrim's great attempt shall fail.

HERETICS ALL

HERETICS all, whoever you be,
In Tarbes or Nimes, or over the sea,
You never shall have good words from me.
Caritas non conturbat me.

But Catholic men that live upon wine
Are deep in the water, and frank, and fine ;
Wherever I travel I find it so,
Benedicamus Domino.

On childing women that are forlorn,
And men that sweat in nothing but scorn :
That is on all that ever were born,
Miserere Domine.

To my poor self on my deathbed,
And all my dear companions dead,
Because of the love that I bore them,
Dona Eis Requiem.

THE DEATH AND LAST CONFESSION OF WANDERING PETER

WHEN Peter Wanderwide was young
He wandered everywhere he would :
And all that he approved was sung,
And most of what he saw was good.

When Peter Wanderwide was thrown
By Death himself beyond Auxerre,
He chanted in heroic tone
To priests and people gathered there :

“ If all that I have loved and seen
Be with me on the Judgment Day,
I shall be saved the crowd between
From Satan and his foul array.

“ Almighty God will surely cry,
‘ St Michael ! Who is this that stands
With Ireland in his dubious eye,
And Perigord between his hands,

“ “ And on his arm the stirrup-thongs,
And in his gait the narrow seas,

THE DEATH OF PETER

And in his mouth Burgundian songs,
But in his heart the Pyrenees ? ’

“ St Michael then will answer right
(And not without angelic shame),
‘ I seem to know his face by sight :
I cannot recollect his name . . . ? ’

“ St Peter will befriend me then,
Because my name is Peter too :
‘ I know him for the best of men
That ever wallopped barley brew.

“ ‘ And though I did not know him well
And though his soul were clogged with sin,
I hold the keys of Heaven and Hell.
Be welcome, noble Peterkin.’

“ Then shall I spread my native wings
And tread secure the heavenly floor,
And tell the Blessed doubtful things
Of Val d’Aran and Perigord.”

This was the last and solemn jest
Of weary Peter Wanderwide.
He spoke it with a failing zest,
And having spoken it, he died.

DEDICATORY ODE

I MEAN to write with all my strength
 (It lately has been sadly waning),
A ballad of enormous length—
 Some parts of which will need explaining.¹

Because (unlike the bulk of men
 Who write for fame or public ends),
I turn a lax and fluent pen
 To talking of my private friends.²

For no one, in our long decline,
 So dusty, spiteful and divided,
Had quite such pleasant friends as mine,
 Or loved them half as much as I did.

.

¹ But do not think I shall explain
 To any great extent. Believe me,
I partly write to give you pain,
 And if you do not like me, leave me.

² And least of all can you complain,
 Reviewers, whose unholy trade is,
To puff with all your might and main
 Biographers of single ladies.

DEDICATORY ODE

The Freshman ambles down the High,
In love with everything he sees,
He notes the very Midland sky,
He sniffs a more than Midland breeze.

“ Can this be Oxford ? This the place ? ”
(He cries) “ of which my father said
The tutoring was a damned disgrace,
The creed a mummery, stuffed and dead ?

“ Can it be here that Uncle Paul
Was driven by excessive gloom,
To drink and debt, and, last of all,
To smoking opium in his room ?

“ Is it from here the people come,
Who talk so loud, and roll their eyes,
And stammer ? How extremely rum !
How curious ! What a great surprise.

“ Some influence of a nobler day
Than theirs (I mean than Uncle Paul's),
Has roused the sleep of their decay,
And flecked with light their ancient walls.

“ O ! dear undaunted boys of old,
Would that your names were carved here,
For all the world in stamps of gold,
That I might read them and revere.

DEDICATORY ODE

“ Who wrought and handed down for me
This Oxford of the larger air,
Laughing, and full of faith, and free,
With youth resplendent everywhere ? ”

Then learn : thou ill-instructed, blind,
Young, callow, and untutored man,
Their private names were¹
Their club was called REPUBLICAN.

.
Where on their banks of light they lie,
The happy hills of Heaven between,
The Gods that rule the morning sky
Are not more young, nor more serene

Than were the intrepid Four that stand,
The first who dared to live their dream.
And on this uncongenial land
To found the Abbey of Theleme.

We kept the Rabelaisian plan : ²
We dignified the dainty cloisters

¹ Never mind.

² The plan forgot (I know not how,
Perhaps the Refectory filled it),
To put a chapel in ; and now
We're mortgaging the rest to build it.

DEDICATORY ODE

With Natural Law, the Rights of Man,
Song, Stoicism, Wine and Oysters.

The library was most inviting :
The books upon the crowded shelves
Were mainly of our private writing :
We kept a school and taught ourselves.

We taught the art of writing things
On men we still should like to throttle :
And where to get the Blood of Kings
At only half a crown a bottle.

.

Eheu Fugaces ! Postume !
(An old quotation out of mode) ;
My coat of dreams is stolen away
My youth is passing down the road.

.

The wealth of youth, we spent it well
And decently, as very few can.
And is it lost ? I cannot tell :
And what is more, I doubt if you can.

The question's very much too wide,
And much too deep, and much too hollow,
And learned men on either side
Use arguments I cannot follow.

DEDICATORY ODE

They say that in the unchanging place,
Where all we loved is always dear,
We meet our morning face to face
And find at last our twentieth year. . . .

They say (and I am glad they say)
It is so ; and it may be so :
It may be just the other way,
I cannot tell. But this I know :

From quiet homes and first beginning,
Out to the undiscovered ends,
There's nothing worth the wear of winning,
But laughter and the love of friends.

.
But something dwindles, oh ! my peers,
And something cheats the heart and passes,
And Tom that meant to shake the years
Has come to merely rattling glasses.

And He, the Father of the Flock,
Is keeping Burmesans in order,
An exile on a lonely rock
That overlooks the Chinese border.

And One (Myself I mean—no less),
Ah !—will Posterity believe it—

DEDICATORY ODE

Not only don't deserve success,
But hasn't managed to achieve it.

Not even this peculiar town
Has ever fixed a friendship firmer,
But—one is married, one's gone down,
And one's a Don, and one's in Burmah.

.
And oh ! the days, the days, the days,
When all the four were off together :
The infinite deep of summer haze,
The roaring charge of autumn weather !

.
I will not try the reach again,
I will not set my sail alone,
To moor a boat bereft of men
At Yarnton's tiny docks of stone.

But I will sit beside the fire,
And put my hand before my eyes,
And trace, to fill my heart's desire,
The last of all our Odysseys.

The quiet evening kept her tryst :
Beneath an open sky we rode,
And passed into a wandering mist
Along the perfect Evenlode.

DEDICATORY ODE

The tender Evenlode that makes
Her meadows hush to hear the sound
Of waters mingling in the brakes,
And binds my heart to English ground.

A lovely river, all alone,
She lingers in the hills and holds
A hundred little towns of stones,
Forgotten in the western wolds.

.

I dare to think (though meaner powers
Possess our thrones, and lesser wits
Are drinking worser wine than ours,
In what's no longer Austerlitz)

That surely a tremendous ghost,
The brazen-lunged, the bumper-filler,
Still sings to an immortal toast,
The Misadventures of the Miller.

The unending seas are hardly bar
To men with such a prepossession :
We were ? Why then, by God, we *are*—
Order ! I call the Club to session !

You do retain the song we set,
And how it rises, trips and scans ?
You keep the sacred memory yet,
Republicans ? Republicans ?

DEDICATORY ODE

You know the way the words were hurled,
To break the worst of fortune's rub ?
I give the toast across the world,
And drink it, " Gentlemen : the Club."

DEDICATION ON THE GIFT OF A BOOK TO A CHILD

CHILD ! do not throw this book about !

Refrain from the unholy pleasure
Of cutting all the pictures out !
Preserve it as your chiefest treasure.

Child, have you never heard it said
That you are heir to all the ages ?
Why, then, your hands were never made
To tear these beautiful thick pages !

Your little hands were made to take
The better things and leave the worse ones :
They also may be used to shake
The Massive Paws of Elder Persons.

And when your prayers complete the day,
Darling, your little tiny hands
Were also made, I think, to pray
For men that lose their fairylands.

DEDICATION OF A CHILD'S BOOK OF
IMAGINARY TALES

WHEREIN WRONG-DOERS SUFFER

AND is it true ? It is not true !
And if it was it wouldn't do
For people such as me and you,
Who very nearly all day long
Are doing something rather wrong.

HOMAGE

I

THERE is a light around your head
Which only Saints of God may wear,
And all the flowers on which you tread
In pleasaunce more than ours have fed,
And supped the essential air
Whose summer is a-pulse with music everywhere.

II

For you are younger than the mornings are
That in the mountains break ;
When upland shepherds see their only star
Pale on the dawn, and make
In his surcease the hours,
The early hours of all their happy circuit take.

FILLE-LA-HAINE

DEATH went into the steeple to ring,
And he pulled the rope and he tolled a knell.
Fille-la-Haine, how well you sing !
Why are they ringing the Passing Bell ?
Death went into the steeple to ring ;
Fille-la-Haine, how well you sing !

Death went down the stream in a boat,
Down the river of Seine went he ;
Fille-la-Haine had a pain in her throat,
Fille-la-Haine was nothing to me.
Death went down the stream in a boat ;
Fille-la-Haine had a pain in her throat.

Death went up the hill in a cart
(I have forgotten her lips and her laughter).
Fille-la-Haine was my sweetheart
(And all the village was following after).
Death went up the hill in a cart.
Fille-la-Haine was my sweetheart.

THE MOON'S FUNERAL

I

THE Moon is dead. I saw her die.
She in a drifting cloud was drest,
She lay along the uncertain west,
A dream to see.
And very low she spake to me :
“ I go where none may understand,
I fade into the nameless land,
And there must lie perpetually.”
And therefore I,
And therefore loudly, loudly I
And high
And very piteously make cry :
“ The Moon is dead. I saw her die.”

II

And will she never rise again ?
The Holy Moon ? Oh, never more !
Perhaps along the inhuman shore
Where pale ghosts are

THE MOON'S FUNERAL

Beyond the low lethean fen
She and some wide infernal star—
To us who loved her never more,
The Moon will never rise again.
Oh ! never more in nightly sky
Her eye so high shall peep and pry
To see the great world rolling by.
For why ?
The Moon is dead. I saw her die.

THE HAPPY JOURNALIST

I LOVE to walk about at night
By nasty lanes and corners foul,
All shielded from the unfriendly light
And independent as the owl.

By dirty grates I love to lurk ;
I often stoop to take a squint
At printers working at their work.
I muse upon the rot they print.

The beggars please me, and the mud :
The editors beneath their lamps
As—Mr Howl demanding blood,
And Lord Retender stealing stamps,

And Mr Bing instructing liars,
His elder son composing trash ;
Beaufort (whose real name is Meyers)
Refusing anything but cash.

I like to think of Mr Meyers,
I like to think of Mr Bing.
I like to think about the liars :
It pleases me, that sort of thing.

THE HAPPY JOURNALIST

Policemen speak to me, but I,
Remembering my civic rights,
Neglect them and do not reply.
I love to walk about at nights !

At twenty-five to four I bunch
Across a cab I can't afford.
I ring for breakfast after lunch.
I am as happy as a lord !

LINES TO A DON

REMOTE and ineffectual Don
That dared attack my Chesterton,
With that poor weapon, half-impelled,
Unlearnt, unsteady, hardly held,
Unworthy for a tilt with men—
Your quavering and corroded pen ;
Don poor at Bed and worse at Table,
Don pinched, Don starved, Don miserable ;
Don stuttering, Don with roving eyes,
Don nervous, Don of crudities ;
Don clerical, Don ordinary,
Don self-absorbed and solitary ;
Don here-and-there, Don epileptic ;
Don puffed and empty, Don dyspeptic ;
Don middle-class, Don sycophantic,
Don dull, Don brutish, Don pedantic ;
Don hypocritical, Don bad,
Don furtive, Don three-quarters mad ;
Don (since a man must make an end),
Don that shall never be my friend.

.
Don different from those regal Dons !
With hearts of gold and lungs of bronze,

LINES TO A DON

Who shout and bang and roar and bawl
The Absolute across the hall,
Or sail in amply bellowing gown
Enormous through the Sacred Town,
Bearing from College to their homes
Deep cargoes of gigantic tomes ;
Dons admirable ! Dons of Might !
Uprising on my inward sight
Compact of ancient tales, and port
And sleep—and learning of a sort.
Dons English, worthy of the land ;
Dons rooted ; Dons that understand.
Good Dons perpetual that remain
A landmark, walling in the plain—
The horizon of my memories—
Like large and comfortable trees.

.
Don very much apart from these,
Thou scapegoat Don, thou Don devoted,
Don to thine own damnation quoted,
Perplexed to find thy trivial name
Reared in my verse to lasting shame.
Don dreadful, rasping Don and wearing,
Repulsive Don—Don past all bearing.
Don of the cold and doubtful breath,
Don despicable, Don of death ;
Don nasty, skimpy, silent, level ;
Don evil ; Don that serves the devil.

LINES TO A DON

Don ugly—that makes fifty lines.
There is a Canon which confines
A Rhymed Octosyllabic Curse
If written in Iambic Verse
To fifty lines. I never cut ;
I far prefer to end it—but
Believe me I shall soon return.
My fires are banked, yet still they burn
To write some more about the Don
That dared attack my Chesterton.

NEWDIGATE POEM

A PRIZE POEM SUBMITTED BY MR LAMBKIN OF BURG-
FORD TO THE EXAMINERS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD ON THE PRESCRIBED POETIC THEME
SET BY THEM IN 1893, "THE BENEFITS OF
THE ELECTRIC LIGHT"

HAIL, Happy Muse, and touch the tuneful string !
The benefits conferred by Science ¹ I sing.

Under the kind Examiners' direction ²

I only write about them in connection
With benefits which the Electric Light
Confers on us ; especially at night.

These are my theme, of these my song shall rise.

My lofty head shall swell to strike the skies.³

And tears of hopeless love bedew the maiden's eyes.

Descend, O Muse, from thy divine abode,

To Osney, on the Seven Bridges Road ;

For under Osney's solitary shade

The bulk of the Electric Light is made.

Here are the works ;—from hence the current flows

Which (so the Company's prospectus goes)

¹ To be pronounced as a monosyllable in the Imperial fashion.

² Mr Punt, Mr Howl, and Mr Grewcock (now, alas, deceased).

³ A neat rendering of "Sublimi feriam sidera vertice."

NEWDIGATE POEM

Can furnish to Subscribers hour by hour
No less than sixteen thousand candle power,¹
All at a thousand volts. (It is essential
To keep the current at this high potential
In spite of the considerable expense.)

The Energy developed represents,
Expressed in foot-tons, the united forces
Of fifteen elephants and forty horses.
But shall my scientific detail thus
Clip the dear wings of Buoyant Pegasus ?

Shall pure statistics jar upon the ear
That pants for Lyric accents loud and clear ?
Shall I describe the complex Dynamo
Or write about its Commutator ? No !

To happier fields I lead my wanton pen,
The proper study of mankind is men.

Awake, my Muse ! Portray the pleasing
sight

That meets us where they make Electric Light.

Behold the Electrician where he stands :
Soot, oil, and verdigris are on his hands ;
Large spots of grease defile his dirty clothes,
The while his conversation drips with oaths.
Shall such a being perish in its youth ?
Alas ! it is indeed the fatal truth.
In that dull brain, beneath that hair unkempt,
Familiarity has bred contempt.

¹ To the Examiners : These facts (of which I guarantee the accuracy) were given me by a Director.

NEWDIGATE POEM

We warn him of the gesture all too late :

Oh, Heartless Jove ! Oh, Adamantine Fate !

Some random touch—a hand's imprudent slip—
The Terminals—a flash—a sound like “ Zip ! ”

A smell of burning fills the started Air—

The Electrician is no longer there !

But let us turn with true Artistic scorn
From facts funereal and from views forlorn
Of Erebus and Blackest midnight born.¹

Arouse thee, Muse ! and chaunt in accents rich
The interesting processes by which
The Electricity is passed along :
These are my theme : to these I bend my song.

It runs encased in wood or porous brick
Through copper wires two millimetres thick,
And insulated on their dangerous mission
By indiarubber, silk, or composition.
Here you may put with critical felicity
The following question : “ What is Electricity ? ”

“ Molecular Activity,” say some,
Others when asked say nothing, and are dumb.
Whatever be its nature, this is clear :
The rapid current checked in its career,
Baulked in its race and halted in its course ²
Transforms to heat and light its latent force :

¹ A reminiscence of Milton : “ Fas est et ab hoste doceri.”

² Lambkin told me he regretted this line, which was for the sake of Rhyme. He would willingly have replaced it, but to his last day could construct no substitute.

NEWDIGATE POEM

It needs no pedant in the lecturer's chair
To prove that light and heat are present there.
The pear-shaped vacuum globe, I understand,
Is far too hot to fondle with the hand.
While, as it is patent to the meanest sight,
The carbon filament is very bright.

As for the lights they hang about the town,
Some praise them highly, others run them down.
This system (technically called the Arc),
Makes some passages too light, others too dark.

But in the house the soft and constant rays
Have always met with universal praise.

For instance : if you want to read in bed
No candle burns beside your curtain's head,
Far from some distant corner of the room
The incandescent lamp dispels the gloom,
And with the largest print need hardly try
The powers of any young and vigorous eye.

Around thee, Muse ! Inspired the poet sings !
I cannot help observing future things !
Life is a vale, its paths are dark and rough
Only because we do not know enough :
When Science has discovered something more
We shall be happier than we were before.

Hail, Britain, Mistress of the Azure Main,
Ten thousand Fleets sweep over thee in vain !
Hail, Mighty Mother of the Brave and Free,
That beat Napoleon, and gave birth to me !
Thou that canst wrap in thine emblazoned robe

NEWDIGATE POEM

One quarter of the habitable globe.
Thy mountains, wafted by a favouring breeze,
Like mighty rocks withstand the stormy seas.

Thou art a Christian Commonwealth ; and yet
Be thou not all unthankful—nor forget
As thou exuldest in Imperial Might
The Benefits of the Electric Light.

THE YELLOW MUSTARD

OH ! ye that prink it to and fro,
In pointed flounce and furbelow,
What have ye known, what can ye know
That have not seen the mustard grow ?

The yellow mustard is no less
Than God's good gift to loneliness ;
And he was sent in gorgeous press
To jangle keys at my distress.

I heard the throstle call again,
Come hither, Pain ! come hither, Pain !
Till all my shameless feet were fain
To wander through the summer rain.

And far apart from human place,
And flaming like a vast disgrace,
There struck me blinding in the face
The livery of the mustard race.

To see the yellow mustard grow
Beyond the town, above, below ;
Beyond the purple houses, oh !
To see the yellow mustard grow !

ON HYGIENE

OF old when folk lay sick and sorely tried,
The doctors gave them medicine and they died.
Here is an happier age, for now we know
Both how to make men sick and keep them so.

THE FALSE HEART

I SAID to Heart, “ How goes it ? ” Heart replied :
“ Right as a Ribstone Pippin ! ” But it lied.

ON BENICIA, WHO WISHED HIM WELL

BENICIA wished me well ; I wish her well.
And what I wish her more I may not tell.

THE POLITICIAN OR THE IRISH EARLDOM

A STRONG and striking Personality,
Worth several hundred thousand pounds—
Of strict political Morality—
Was walking in his park-like Grounds ;
When, just as these began to pall on him
(I mean the Trees, and Things like that),
A Person who had come to call on him
Approached him, taking off his Hat.

He said, with singular veracity :
“ I serve our Sea-girt Mother-Land
In no conspicuous capacity.
I am but an Attorney ; and
I do a little elementary
Negotiation, now and then,
As Agent for a Parliamentary
Division of the Town of N. . . .

“ Merely as one of the Electorate—
A member of the Commonweal—
Before completing my Directorate,
I want to know the way you feel

THE POLITICIAN

On matters more or less debatable ;
As—whether our Imperial Pride
Can treat as taxable or rateable
The Gardens of . . .” His host replied :

“ The Ravages of Inebriety
(Alas ! increasing day by day !)
Are undermining all Society.
I do not hesitate to say
My country squanders her abilities,
Observe how Montenegro treats
Her Educational Facilities. . . .
. . . As to the African defeats,

“ I bitterly deplored their frequency ;
On Canada we are agreed,
The Laws protecting Public Decency
Are very, very lax indeed !
The Views of most of the Nobility
Are very much the same as mine,
On Thingumbob’s eligibility . . .
I trust that you remain to dine ? ”

His Lordship pressed with importunity,
As rarely he had pressed before.

.

It gave them both an opportunity
To know each other’s value more.

SHORT BALLAD AND POSTSCRIPT ON CONSOLS

I

GIGANTIC daughter of the West
 (The phrase is Tennysonian), who
From this unconquerable breast
 The vigorous milk of Freedom drew
—We gave it freely—shall the crest
 Of Empire in your keeping true,
Shall England—I forget the rest,
 But Consols are at 82.

II

Now why should anyone invest,
 As even City people do
(His Lordship did among the rest),
 When stocks—but what is that to you ?
And then, who ever could have guessed
 About the guns—and horses too !—
Besides, they knew their business best,
 And Consols are at 82.

SHORT BALLAD & POSTSCRIPT ON CONSOLS

III

It serves no purpose to protest,
It isn't manners to halloo
About the way the thing was messed—
Or vaguely called a man a Jew.
A gentleman who cannot jest
Remarked that we should muddle through
(The continent was much impressed),
And Consols are at 82.

Envoi.

And, Botha lay at Pilgrim's Rest
And Myberg in the Great Karroo
(A desert to the south and west),
And Consols are at 82.

Postscript.

Permit me—if you do not mind—
To add it would be screaming fun
If, after printing this, I find
Them after all at 81.

Or 70 or 63,
Or 55 or 44,
Or 39 and going free,
Or 28—or even more.

SHORT BALLAD & POSTSCRIPT ON CONSOLS

No matter—take no more advice
From doubtful and intriguing men.
Refuse the stuff at any price,
And slowly watch them fall to 10.

Meanwhile I feel a certain zest
In writing once again the new
Refrain that all is for the best,
And Consols are at 82.

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